

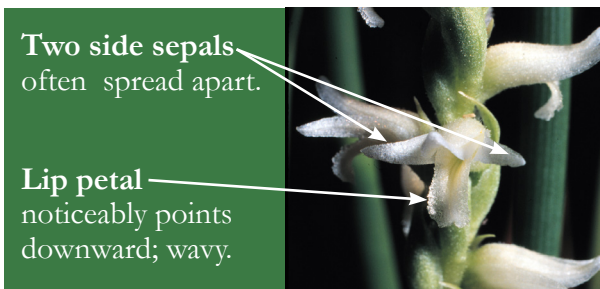
## TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING UTE LADIES'-TRESSES

*The white flowering stalks catch one's eyes, but in the leafy or dormant stages plants go unnoticed.*

**Habitat:** Wet meadows or swales in river valleys.

**Plants:** Perennial, 5-20 inches tall.

**Flowers:** Many, tubular, white flowers spiral on the upper stem, like 'braided hair.'



**Leaves:** Long and narrow, becoming smaller towards the upper stem.

**Best Time to Survey:** Late July - August.

**Look-alikes:** Differ in size, shape, & arrangement of petals, sepals, & leaves.

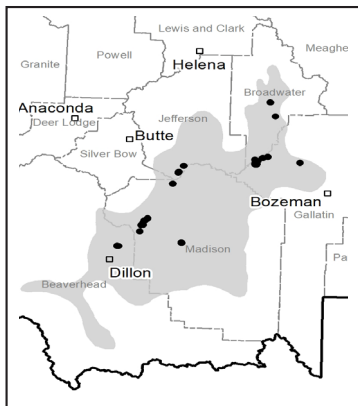
Hooded Ladies'-tresses - *Spiranthes romanzoffiana*

Rein- & Bog-orchids - *Piperia* & *Platanthera* species

Search on **Montana Field Guide:**  
[fieldguide.mt.gov](http://fieldguide.mt.gov)

## DISTRIBUTION IN MONTANA

- Not all potential habitat has been surveyed.
- Three consecutive survey years are best to determine presence due to prolonged dormancy.



ULT known sites (•) and range (gray shading).

## WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION?

### Montana Natural Heritage Program

1515 East 6th Avenue, Helena, MT 59601

*Montana's source for information on plants, animals, and biological communities. A program of the Natural Resource Information System at the Montana State Library operated under a contract by the University of Montana.*

**Website:** [mtnhp.org](http://mtnhp.org)

**Montana Field Guide:** [fieldguide.mt.gov](http://fieldguide.mt.gov)

**MTNHP Botanist:** Andrea Pipp 406-444-3019

### Natural Resources Conservation Service

*The NRCS provides America's farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners with financial and technical assistance to voluntarily use conservation practices to achieve focused natural resource outcomes, helping the environment and our working lands!*

#### NRCS Service Center Offices

Beaverhead County - Dillon, MT	406-683-3800
Broadwater County - Townsend, MT	406-266-4253
Jefferson County - Whitehall, MT	406-287-3215
Gallatin County - Bozeman, MT	406-522-4000
Madison County - Sheridan, MT	406-842-5741

### U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

#### Montana Ecological Services Field Office

585 Shephard Way, Suite 1, Helena, MT 59601  
406-449-5225

*The Montana Ecological Services Field Office provides biological advice to other federal and state agencies, industry, and members of the public concerning the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats that may be affected by development activities.*



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

# UTE LADIES'-TRESSES

*Spiranthes diluvialis*



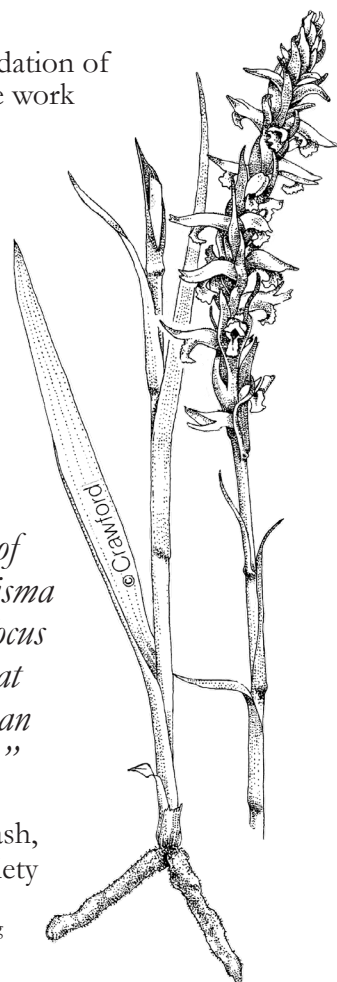
*A rare orchid native to valleys in the Beaverhead, Jefferson, Madison, Upper Missouri, and Ruby River drainages in Montana where land is used for agriculture and urban infrastructure.*

## THE MANY VALUES OF UTE LADIES'-TRESSES (ULT)

- A unique part of Montana's natural heritage.
- A sign of good land management.
- Can co-exist with certain agricultural practices.
- Winter grazing can promote flower and fruit/seed production.
- Palatable for ungulates.
- Important pollinator plant for bees.
- An indicator of healthy environments because its life cycle requires specialized habitats, pollinators, and soil fungi.

Furthermore....

- Plants form the foundation of the habitats where we work and recreate.
- Plants provide us with oxygen, food, medicine, shelter, and landscaping; yet most rare plants, like ULT, are not well studied.



*"Orchids are plants of great beauty and charisma that can be used to focus attention on habitat that holds more than just the beautiful."*

- Ned Nash,  
American Orchid Society

Used with permission from  
[northamericanorchidcenter.org](http://northamericanorchidcenter.org)

## ACTIONS THAT SUPPORT CONSERVATION

*ULT grows in small areas, making protection easier and requiring little time or financial investment.*

### ULT is sustained by:

- Spring floods that recede and keep soils moist into late summer or a high groundwater table because these reduce competing vegetation.
- Grazing from October to May which reduces competing vegetation and vole predation, increasing flowering and fruiting.
- Haying in the early summer before flower stalks emerge which can promote successful reproduction.
- Admiring without picking flowers which helps plants successfully reproduce.

### Gathering data helps plants and landowners:

- Surveys can assist landowners in knowing where populations occur, supporting compatible land management practices, and helping to recover ULT.
- Contact your Local Conservation District or the MTNHP, NRCS, or USFWS offices to learn more or get involved.
- Submit observations, photographs, and data to the MTNHP Botanist.



## WHY WE ARE WORKING TO CONSERVE UTE LADIES'-TRESSES

- Montana has only 28 known sites - one site is likely extirpated.
- Small populations, often under 100 plants.
- All populations occur on private or state lands.
- Old data; 50% of sites surveyed before 1999.
- Potential habitat is present, but not surveyed.
- Conservation on private lands can help recovery, leading to de-listing as Threatened.
- Landowners may not realize how certain land practices can benefit ULT.

## UTE LADIES'-TRESSES AS A THREATENED SPECIES

*Recognizing that America's rich natural heritage is of esthetic, ecological, educational, and scientific values to our Nation and its people, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was created in 1973 to recover & protect imperiled species.*

Listed in 1992 as Threatened because of:

- Habitat loss and modification
- Small populations in few locations

ULT occurs in restricted habitats of Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, Utah, & Washington.

## Threatened Plants Have Few Protections Under ESA

- ESA regulations for Threatened plants do not apply on private lands.
- Any potential destruction, damage, or removal of Threatened plants on private lands is not a violation of the ESA.
- If a landowner is receiving federal funding for an activity, the federal agency will work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine possible effects to listed plants.